

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 33, 38, and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over Albrecht. Independent claim 43 was not mentioned, but the Applicants will respond as though claim 43 were rejected using the same grounds. The Examiner also objected to the Information Disclosure Statement and the Oath/Declaration associated with the above noted case. The Applicant contacted the Examiner on April 10, 2006 regarding the discrepancies with the Information Disclosure Statement originally filed on October 7, 2002 and the Oath/Declaration and the matters are believed to have been addressed.

Albrecht describes a system where "an electronic signature is generated in a predetermined manner and attached to a transferable unit of write data, to facilitate authenticating the write data before allowing the write data to be written into a protected non-volatile storage. The write data is authenticated using a collection of secured authentication functions. Additionally, the actual writing of the authenticated write data into the protected non-volatile storage is performed by a secured copy utility." (Column 1, Lines 33-41). The Applicants submitted that Albrecht does not describe any user logic, configurable device, or programmable logic device.

The independent claims 1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 33, 38, 43, and 46 all recite user logic and configurable device. Dependent claims 3, 7, 11, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, and 44 all recite a programmable logic device (PLD).

According to various embodiments, "the present invention allows the owner of intellectual property ("IP") in the form of configuration data for a configurable PLD to protect against unauthorized use of the IP. A party generally will be unable to use a PLD incorporating the configuration data unless that party has authority to use the configuration information in a programmable device." (Page 9, Lines 17-21) For example, a customer may be required to acquire a license before a signal processing block on a programmable logic device can be used. The signal processing block is one example of user logic that is disabled.

The present application specifies and describes "user logic" and "configurable device." "In this disclosure, a "configurable device" or "configurable PLD" is defined to be a

programmable device that ultimately contains the user logic (that is, the function(s) programmed and implemented in a PLD by a user). Typically, such a device has a volatile memory and must be programmed upon each power-up, though not every configurable device must possess these characteristics. Examples of configurable devices include SRAM PLDs and RAM-based PLDs (for example, Altera FLEX devices).” (Page 2, Lines 11-16)

By contrast, Albrecht does not describe any “user logic” or “configurable device.” The Examiner argues that user logic is a flash memory, and disabled user logic is write disabled flash memory. The Applicants respectfully disagree. Flash memory is not user logic. In fact, flash memory is not even logic. Flash memory is merely a mechanism for storing data and does not support any logic mechanisms whatsoever. It is recognized that many devices include both logic and memory. For example, a programmable device may include logic elements as well as memory for holding data processed by the logic elements. However, the memory portion of the device is not referred to as logic. Logic and memory are fairly distinct resources on electronic devices and consequently it is respectfully submitted that a flash memory is not user logic.

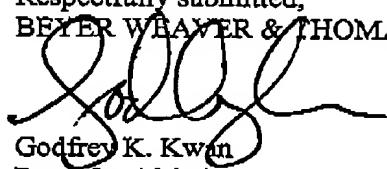
The Examiner also argues that Albrecht describes a configurable device. Applicants are not sure what the Examiner intended to be the configurable device in Albrecht. The Examiner could have intended that the configurable device be the flash memory/BIOS or the computer system including the flash memory/BIOS. A flash memory/BIOS is merely a memory, while a computer system including the flash memory/BIOS is barely described. However, none of these is a configurable device.

Furthermore, the Examiner in rejecting various depending claims, acknowledges that the cited art does not teach the use of an SRAM PLD or an EEPROM PLD, but takes Official Notice that use of such memory in a PLD is old and well known. The Applicants recognize that SRAM PLDs are well known, but use of SRAM PLDs in the context recited by the claims is believed to be novel and nonobvious.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above remarks relating to independent claims and certain dependent claims, the remaining dependent claims are believed allowable for at least the reasons noted above. Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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